







# GOVERNMENT OF INDIA



सत्यमेव जयते

## REPORT OF THE Backward Classes Commission

Vol. I

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# VOLUME

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Government of India  
**Backward Classes Commission**

*New Delhi 2, the 30th March 1955*

Revered President,

It is with a mixed sense of joy, anxiety and relief, that I submit to you the Report of the Backward Classes Commission. You were pleased to appoint the Commission on the 29th January 1953, but formally inaugurated it on the 18th March 1953. It took us full two long years to finish our labours and prepare the Report. We did our best to present a unanimous Report, and I am glad to say that the major portion of our recommendations has been almost unanimous. From the very complexity of our task, it was inevitable that there should be differences of opinion even on fundamental matters. It should be a matter of agreeable surprise that the members of the Commission were united on so many matters and even where we have felt constrained to hold different views, our anxiety for the welfare of the backward classes and betterment of their condition is not in any way the less. The very minutes of dissent prove this beyond any doubt.

2. I was expected, as Chairman, to prepare the report of the Commission. I had my notes ready, written out fairly in detail, but I felt that it would be much better and more satisfactory if I allowed my colleagues to write the report after reading my notes and utilising them to the extent they liked. This task of writing the Report, I left to Shri Mariappa, who has had valuable experience in the administration of the Mysore State. Although he could not devote much time in the beginning to the work of the Commission on account of his preoccupations with the Mysore Congress work, he gave sufficient time, and worked hard in preparing the Report. This rendered my work very easy. I had simply to go over what he wrote, and suggest a few modifications here and there. My other colleagues also had their share, and the Report, as it finally emerged, must be accepted as the joint production of us all; but, I must express my heartfelt thanks to Shri Mariappa, for the unstinted labour which he devoted on the production of the Report. Dr. Anup Singh helped us to put the report in shape.

Shri Shah, with his knowledge of the Public Service Commission, of public accounts and Anthropology was of great help to us in many ways. It was at his insistence that we could work out our chapter on Grants in detail. The details were chiefly supplied by Shri Patel.

3. We prepared a detailed State-wise Report, and I had expected that it will be the second part of our general Report, but we found that it would take too long a time before it was discussed in detail and finalised. Our recommendations, which are the main part of the Report, do not depend upon the State-wise section. We therefore, towards the end, decided to delete this portion. But, some thought



and labour has been bestowed upon this State-wise Reports section—and I would recommend that, although it is not a part of our official report, it may be forwarded to the various States and they might make what use they like of the contents.

It was our intention to prepare a detailed glossary of the various communities recommended by us, for being included in the list of the Other Backward Classes. We received some information from the States and collected some through our Research Section. This information also may be useful, but we found it difficult to go over these and arrive at a uniformity of conclusions. We decided, therefore, to drop this glossary also from our Report, although it would have been a valuable commentary on the lists we have supplied. The Government of India may, with the help of the State Governments and the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, check, enlarge and complete the glossary that we prepared, and issue it as an official publication. It will help administrators in many ways.

It is evident that Government wanted to know the views and aspirations of the representatives of the backward classes. The very selection of the Members on the Commission indicated this anxiety, and the Report will show that it clearly voices the feelings, fears and aspirations of the present-day leaders of the various backward communities in the various States of India. Backwardness, even in formulating the feelings, fears and aspirations, must be an inevitable characteristic in this matter, and it should not surprise anyone if both these fears and aspirations belong more to the past.

4. The age-old resignation of the masses to their lot is gone. They no longer believe that it is Fate that has kept them backward. They are not yet alive to their own share in the backwardness, *viz.*, apathy, lethargy and negligence. They are too backward to be introspective and to find out what is wrong with themselves. It is but natural and to some extent justifiable that they should find fault with the situation around them, and their eyes should be reverted on the fact of their being exploited by the upper classes. Their representatives and leaders have read the literature that we evolved in finding faults with the evils of the British rule. They have come to know how one race dominates another, and how those who have to suffer have, perforce, to unite against the forces of vested interests. They have heard of the inevitability of class conflict. No wonder if they are prone to draw hasty conclusions.

5. Social reformers from ancient times have always been introspective. Most of them, coming from the upper castes have been most critical of the faults and foibles of their own class and criticised them in unstinted measure, for all the social neglect and injustice towards the backward classes. All this has combined to help the representatives of the backward classes in preparing a case, and it should not surprise anyone if the case is overdrawn, stereo-typed and fails to recognize the amount of righteousness in the nation expressed in the struggle for social justice carried on by the social leaders through the ages.

6. We have to recognize the painful fact that all the efforts of the social reformers belonging to the upper classes have been more

than counter-balanced by the blind-selfishness and traditional self-justification of the upper classes. There is an amount of uneasiness amongst the backward classes. This has been carefully fanned and organized by interested persons who stand to gain both materially and in leadership by organizing discontent.

7. However unpalatable this may be, and however turbid the motives of some of the representatives of the backward classes, no one can say that they are not justified in complaining that there is an unsympathetic uniformity in the attitude of the majority of the upper classes, from which the backward classes have to suffer.

8. I would plead, therefore, that the case of the backward classes need not be analysed too critically, and it is no use marshalling evidence to prove that the accusations levelled at the upper classes by the backward classes are not substantially correct, and that it is only interested representatives that distort the situation. Even conceding that the whole picture is one-sided and over-drawn, one has to recognize that there is an uneasiness in the minds of the masses, and this uneasiness is gathering momentum.

9. It is unfortunate that the Swaraj Government which is struggling hard to establish social justice has been left to atone for the blind and conservative attitude and the traditional policy of the upper classes, with the result that even though Government is prompted with the best of motives, little credit is given to it, and all the evils of the social system are levelled at it. It would be well if representatives of the backward classes remembered that whatever good they find in the Constitution and the liberal policy of the Government is the result of the awakened conscience of the upper classes themselves. Whatever the Government is doing by way of atonement is readily accepted and acclaimed by the nation as a whole. And let it not be forgotten that the upper classes have contributed their share in formulating the policies of the Government. Removal of untouchability, establishment of equality and social justice, special consideration for the backward classes—all these elements found their place in the Constitution without a single dissentient voice from the upper classes.

10. Some people who are unwilling to recognize any good point in their own nation try to explain this righteousness as a reaction to world opinion. We know how far world opinion counts where self interest and pride of race are dominant! We know how far world opinion is able to influence the policies of countries like America, South Africa and Portugal! It is not fair to be blind to the awakened conscience of the nation itself in which the upper classes are also honourably included—when recognizing the good points in the Constitution, of which we have every reason to be proud.

11. We have now to see if there are any defects in the framework of the Constitution itself, or the policy of the Government, by which the enlightened conscience fails sufficiently to organize itself and forces of selfishness, self-aggrandisement and mutual suspicion are oftentimes allowed to be organized and pitted against each other leading unwittingly to a class conflict. I am led to believe that such defects are present both in the Constitution and in the policy of the

Government. It is not easy to locate them, but it seems to be a patent fact that forces of opportunism, selfishness, and self-aggrandisement, mutual suspicion and conflict, on both sides invariably come to the fore-front and get organized, whereas the forces of brotherliness, of social justice and gratitude are not allowed or do not get a chance to function with a united will. Unless we feel gratitude for the patience of the long-suffering masses and for their respect for law and order; unless we have gratitude to the best amongst the nation for their struggle for the establishment of righteousness; unless we have gratitude for all that the mahatmas and social reformers have been doing, and unless we feel grateful to Providence for the mysterious way in which It is training the nation for a higher service of humanity, we may not be able to appreciate the forces of good that have been working in our nation, and, through our nation, for the betterment of the lot of humanity.

12. We have found it inevitable to attribute most of the evils of our social condition to caste. We are not blind to the good intentions and wisdom of our ancestors who built the caste structure. It was, perhaps, the only way through which they could teach the nation to forget and rise above racial, clannish, tribal and similar biological groupings of society and to accept a workable arrangement of social existence based on cultural hierarchy and occupational self-government.

13. But whatever the beauty and success of these primitive social experiments of the past, we are sufficiently advanced today towards a feeling of nationhood and national solidarity. We were confronted with the existence of a multiplicity of religions in our land in an age of democracy; we struggled through the situation and have managed to come out successful, however severely mauled and weakened we may have been in the process. We hope now to build a familyhood of races, a familyhood of religions and a familyhood of cultures. We are now beyond the necessity of working on the basis of hierarchy. We have been able to build a feeling of oneness in the whole nation. We have learnt to adjust religious, racial and cultural differences. We have decided to overcome the inequalities based on differences of wealth and intellectual equipment, and that by a democratic process of giving equal opportunities to all to attain the highest alike in educational, cultural and economic fields.

14. National solidarity demands that in a democratic set up Government recognize only two ends—the individual at one end and the nation as a whole at the other—and that nothing should be encouraged to organize itself in between these two ends to the detriment of the freedom of the individual and solidarity of the nation. All communal and denominational organizations and groupings of lesser and narrower units have to be watched carefully so that they do not jeopardise the national solidarity and do not weaken the efforts of the nation to serve all the various elements in the body politic with equity.

15. The secular democracy of India gives full freedom to all the established religions of the world to exist and propagate themselves in the land because this our secular democracy has equal respect for

all of them, of course to the extent that they do not undermine universal brotherhood and respect for the personality of every citizen irrespective of his or her economical, educational or cultural traditions or standpoint. Mutual respect, mutual help and mutual trust are the touchstone on which all communal and denominational activities will be tested, and anything that undermines these fundamental principles of democracy will be exposed and brought to book.

16. It is a hopeful sign of the times and a guarantee for the future well-being of every interest in the nation that Government is fast progressing towards the ideals of a socialistic pattern, and the people themselves are accepting and developing the ideals of Sarvodaya in all the sectors of our national existence. Thus both the nation and the national Government have accepted the ideal of familyhood of all the nations, all races, of all civilizations and cultures. It is in this context that the condition of the backward classes in India has to be understood and appreciated, and the remedies suggested are to be systematically applied. The remedies will not yield the desired result within a stipulated period unless there is a nation-wide awakening through systematic propaganda and moral revival, and practical steps are taken both by the Government and the people. The old taboos, along with the hierarchical segregation in the matter of food and drink and marriages, have to be overcome. The Bhoodan movement is teaching the whole nation to accept the familyhood of all the people living in this land. It is not merely an equitable redistribution of land between the landed and the landless, but it is a recognition by the nation that we all form one human family and we are responsible for each other's well-being.

17. A similar nation-wide social revolution, not confined to the upper classes, neither only to the Hindus alone, has to be inaugurated.

18. All our social reform movements and the moral fervour behind them are so far generally confined to the Hindus. We have always allowed the Muslim and the Christian communities to have their own way. This may be a good example in toleration; it may perhaps reflect the hope that the reform amongst the Hindus may give rise to a healthy emulation in the minds of other denominations also. But political self-interest has so far come in their way, and orthodoxy amongst the Christians and the Muslims and other denominations is as hopeless and hard as the orthodoxy amongst the Hindus—only, the former is stronger and never discredited. Sometimes the criticism is heard that the Government is partial to the Hindus in the sense that it throws its whole weight on the side of social reform amongst Hindus and helps that community to overcome its weakness, but when it comes to any social legislation for overcoming the social defects and antiquated moral standards of non-Hindus, the Government has thought it fit to follow a policy of non-intervention and non-interference. This is bound to weaken the nation as a whole, and thereby weaken the forces of moral and spiritual reform started in the Muslim and Christian countries of the world. It is sometimes a wiser course to allow social reform in the minority communities to grow spontaneously from within instead of using the weight of the enlightened sense of the majority community for quickening the pace of reform amongst them. It is safe to wait for sometime at least.

## The Backward Amongst the Non-Hindus

19. Being convinced that the upper castes among the Hindus have to atone for the neglect of which they were guilty towards the "lower" classes, I was prepared to recommend to Government that all special help should be given only to the backward classes and even the poor and the deserving among the upper classes may be safely kept out from the benefit of this special help. My eyes were however opened to the dangers of suggesting remedies on caste basis when I discovered that it is going to have a most unhealthy effect on the Muslim and Christian sections of the nation. It is a patent fact that the bulk of the Muslims and Christians in India are converts from the Hindu fold. This conversion was encouraged by the fact that Islam and Christianity were fundamentally opposed to caste. The "lower castes" in the Hindu fold left their traditional religion and joined the religion of the ruling race because they felt assured that in that way they would be free from the tyranny of caste and caste prejudices.

20. For the purpose of the Backward Classes Commission, we could not accept the view that all Indian Christians or all Muslims were backward without accepting the logical conclusion that all Hindus also were in the same sense equally backward. The Government of India recognized certain castes among the Hindus as backward and offered special scholarships, concessions and privileges to these communities. This led the Muslims and Christians also to assert that although their religion was fundamentally different, and that theoretically it is opposed to caste, in practice their society was more or less caste-ridden. The special concessions and privileges accorded to Hindu castes acted as a bait and a bribe inciting Muslim and Christian society to revert to caste and caste prejudices and the healthy social reforms effected by Islam and Christianity were being thus rendered null and void. Muslims came forward to prove that except for the four upper castes, namely, Sheikh, Syed, Moghul and Pathan, all the other Muslim castes were inferior and backward. The Indian Christians also were prepared to fall in the trap. They told the Ministry of Education and the Backward Classes Commission that caste is rampant among them. We discovered to our pain and sorrow that untouchability did obtain in the extreme South amongst Indian Christians, and Indian Christians were prepared in many places to assert that they were still guided by caste not only in the matter of untouchability but in social hierarchy of high and low. Their social and religious leaders in their anxiety to secure some Governmental help for their own people supported the contention that caste was rampant among Indian Christians also.

21. This was a rude shock and it drove me to the conclusion that the remedies we suggested were worse than the evil we were out to combat.

22. This painful realization came to me almost towards the end of our labours. I could not stem the current of opinion within the Commission itself and ultimately decided, though reluctantly, to side with the majority with whom I had co-operated throughout in formulating remedies on caste basis. It is only when the Report was being finalised that I started thinking anew and found that backwardness could be tackled on a basis or a number of bases other than that of caste. I only succeeded in raising the suspicion of the majority

of my colleagues, that I was trying to torpedo the recommendations of the Commission. This was another reason why I signed the report without even a minute of dissent. We must be able to help both Indian Christians and Muslims without their being driven to accept the fissiparous principle of caste. This will also enable us to remove the bitterness which the extremely poor and helpless amongst the upper class Hindus feel that they are being victimised for no fault of their own. Once we eschew the principle of caste, it will be possible to help the extremely poor and deserving from all communities. Care of course must be taken to give preference to those who come from the traditionally neglected social classes.

### **Extreme Poverty also Leads to Social Backwardness**

23. A secular State that does not concern itself with religious differences and has no preference for one religion over another, cannot go into the details of the religious prejudices of one section against another. It is only when a community or a group is proved to be working under a special handicap and is not allowed freely to function as citizens, that the State may intervene and make special provision for the advancement of such under-privileged and handicapped communities. It is not enough to prove that one community is regarded as inferior by another. The Christians may look down upon the Jews and the Jews may retaliate with the same feelings. The Brahman may regard the Bania as inferior and the Bania in his turn may regard the Brahman as a mere social dependent. But such opinions and prejudices do not come in the way of the full growth of these communities. This opinion about the inferiority of certain communities, has not necessarily retarded the progress of those communities, either educationally or economically. If such communities have neglected education it is because they had no use for it. Now that they have discovered their mistake, it is for them to make the necessary efforts for making up the leeway.

24. They will naturally receive whatever help is available to all citizens, but they can claim no special help because they neglected education in the past. And yet, if these communities are to be regarded as backward and given additional help on a caste basis, the only course open to the State would be to impose a communal tax on the well-to-do members. Whatever money is collected through such a tax may be spent on giving special scholarships and help to the poorer members of those communities.

25. Till recently, good many Communities were organizing caste conferences and collecting funds for granting scholarships to boys and girls of their own community. That was a good lesson in self-help and a good number of communities have thus come forward in material well being. But now all burden is sought to be thrown on the common exchequer and those who have thoughtlessly neglected education in the past are now seeking preferential treatment in Government services. This is anything but fair. It is one thing to help those who have been long neglected and who have no conception of the needs of modern times and who had not the wherewithals with which to educate themselves. Such communities deserve all help, but the richer and well-to-do communities may not neglect their own poor people and throw the burden on the common exchequer, and yet ask for special preferential treatment for even the rich amongst them, so far as Government services are concerned.

A general formula of helping all persons, to whatever caste or community they may belong, provided they belong to the special backward class of the extremely poor, covers such cases of extremely poor, who have been cruelly neglected by their own community. Families whose income is less than Rs. 800/- a year do need special help irrespective of the community to which they belong. Such poor and deserving may even belong either to the upper communities or the educationally backward but otherwise prosperous people of the dominant communities among the backward classes. The extremely poor cannot be denied special help simply because they happen to belong to a particular community.

26. Care of course, must be taken to see that these do not carry away all State help, and leave the extremely backward communities unattended to. The list of backward communities supplied by us ought to be a guide in all preferences. Unfortunately, we have not been able to supply a regular hierarchy of all the communities residing in India. That perhaps, would have been the best guide for preference in all governmental concessions and privileges.

### **Reservation in Services**

27. I am definitely against reservation in Government Services for any community for the simple reason that the services are not meant for the servants but they are meant for the service of society as a whole. Administration must have the services of the best men available in the land and these may be found in all communities. Reservation of posts for certain backward communities would be as strange as reservation of patients for particular doctors. The patients are not meant to supply adequate or proportionate clientele to all the doctors, whatever their qualifications.

28. The best policy that could be recommended is that given the same or almost the same qualifications, candidates or aspirants from the backward classes should be given a decided preference.

29. Coming to details of governmental services the principle of "no reservation" but "generous preference" should be strictly followed in class I (and perhaps in class II also) of services because services belonging to these classes demand higher standards of integrity, efficiency and initiative. It is not suggested that these qualities are the monopoly of any one community or that these qualities are at a discount in the case of other communities. Inferiority complex cultivated by the backward communities leads them to believe that they are, and will always remain, deficient in certain qualities, and therefore, they need the backing of reservation. Experience in the past proves that reservations come in the way of healthy emulation and those who learnt to depend upon reservation are oftentimes, not alert enough to improve their quality. They rest on their privileges and all zest for self-improvement is dulled.

30. But we have to recognize that the tradition of the past so many years, when the British rulers wanted to placate many elements, has created a demand for reservation in Government jobs. The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes already enjoy some reservation. It is natural, therefore, that the Other Backward Classes should also desire to have some reservation in their favour,

31. In this matter one clear principle must be accepted and observed. Reservations if contemplated must not exceed 49 per cent. whatever the total population of all the "Reserved" communities.

32. I believe that in class I and class II Services, the backward classes will stand to gain, both morally and materially, if they do not demand a reservation percentage in the vacancies and simply rely on the fair-mindedness of the administration to use their preference in favour of the backward classes. They could then demand greatest facilities for training and education in order to fit themselves for the highest jobs, as speedily as possible.

33. As regards Class III and Class IV services, it has to be recognised that the policy of preference may not work with equal force. It will take some time before the policy of preference percolates through the thick layer of indifference and vested interests. I would, therefore, accept 49 per cent for the reservation of seats, all told, for all the backward classes. Candidates from the backward classes can of course compete in the sector of 51 per cent and take any number of seats by sheer worth over and above the reservation. In class III services, I would have an additional principle of favouring women candidates over men. Most of the clerical posts must, hereafter, go to women, men being expected to work in the fields or trade and industry.

34. In the case of class IV services, there is an almost cent per cent monopoly of the Bhangi Class for scavenging work. There is, already an ample percentage of backward people in class IV. Here I would recommend that the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and the starred communities from amongst the Other Backward Classes should have a definite preference over others.

35. In class IV services over and above necessary personal qualification, the recommendation of certain reliable persons is important because much depends upon the loyalty and integrity of this service. The usual practice is to demand that there must be at least two persons who stand guarantee for the honesty, loyalty and regularity of this useful and humble servant. This leads to each man bringing another from his own community because, thus alone can he stand guarantee for the good behaviour of the new man. This principle is healthy enough, but there are wholesale communities amongst the backward classes who have never had a chance of occupying even the post of chaprasis, jamedars and daftries. Such unrepresented communities need special preference.

36. The policy recommended does not preclude the backward classes from entering in the sector of service open to general competition. It must be the policy of Government to encourage more and more people from the backward communities to occupy places of responsibility and initiative. The greater the confidence shown to the backward classes, the greater is the security of the State. Therefore, although some of us are unwilling to reserve more percentage of seats for the backward classes, we whole-heartedly recommend to the Government that they should do everything in their power to see that men of ability and integrity from amongst the backward classes are given a definite preference, other things being equal; and they



are made to feel that the country is theirs and the whole nation has complete confidence in their patriotism and equal love for all sections of the nation.

37. In class III services much depends upon actual experience rather than on initial qualifications. Therefore, we would recommend that candidates or applicants from the backward classes should be given proper coaching before enlistment and those who are on the borderland of average qualifications should be given further coaching even after selection, and thus, every effort should be made to train candidates from the backward classes to be efficient members of Government services.

38. One paramount consideration that must be accepted is that just as efficiency and integrity are essential in Government services, it is equally essential that the largest portion of the civil population should be trained to run the administration with integrity and efficiency. No democracy can be safe, if adequate qualification for Government services is confined to a few communities only. Democracy, to be broad-based must train the maximum number of citizens for the efficient discharge of public duties, especially in the case of a welfare state, where the public sector is going to be increased by leaps and bounds, and the number of Government services is being increased from day to day. It is essential that the Government should have the maximum number of persons trained for running the administration from amongst all the communities.

39. We might even go to the length of recommending that the universities and institutions of secondary education should have specialised courses for training young men and young women for Governmental administrative jobs. If mathematics, geography and similar subjects are essential, it is equally essential that principles of administration and the technique of running various departments of Government must also be compulsory subject in secondary and higher educational institutions.

40. Under a democracy, a Government will be judged by the number of servants it is able to retain from all the communities composing the nation.

41. The Parliament could demand from the Government an annual report showing how many candidates it trained in all in the art of administration.

### **Reservation in Institutes of Higher Education.**

42. As for assistance in the matter of education for the backward classes, I am convinced that introduction of Basic Education in all the States will help the backward communities to cultivate self-confidence. They will also have a better chance of succeeding in open competition, and having the special advantage of mixing with people and serving them, they will prove themselves better administrators and leaders of society.

43. Seats in the higher technical institutes of science, engineering, medicine, etc., will be limited for some years to come, and there should be a generous reservation in favour of the backward classes.

44. Here again, the best interests of the nation demand that the most intelligent and the most promising should be trained to supply the needs of the nation. You cannot deny the nation its right of being served by the best. In these days of keen competition, both in trade and war, no nation can afford to have indifferent persons trained to higher service. Here again, the fears of the backward classes that they will not be able to come up to the level of the upper classes are entirely unfounded. Students from the backward classes who have come up to matriculation standard can easily hold their own against the upper classes. Experience of the past is no guide for the achievements of the future. The backward classes are already feeling that they are the equals of the upper castes, and given a proper chance, they can easily hold their own.

45. But I am definitely of the opinion that in the field of education, the backward classes must be made to feel that here at least they will have everything in their favour, and that the nation is determined to give them the best chance of educating themselves and coming to the top. I have, therefore, whole-heartedly supported the recommendation that up to seventy per cent of the seats ought to be reserved for the best amongst the backward classes. The remaining thirty per cent seats, and any seats not absorbed by candidates from "Reserved" communities should go to the "Unreserved" communities. This rule should apply for the next ten years. It may be confined to all the existing institutes of higher technical education. The tension and the need for rationing will be eased as more institutes are opened. The nation is determined to develop in science and technology; so more and more institutes will be opened in the near future and almost every one that has shown a capacity of succeeding in higher technical education, will get a seat. No reservation will then be necessary.

46. I would recommend that some institutes may be reserved specially for the benefit of the backward classes and the backward students could be admitted to these to the limit of ninety per cent, ten per cent being reserved for the upper communities, so that the students of the backward communities will have a chance of mixing freely and brushing their intellect against the intellect of students having more self-confidence. If this suggestion is followed, then institutes not reserved for the backward classes could throw their doors open to all students irrespective of communal considerations.

47. We have to hear the other side which also is important enough. Free India is struggling to come up to the level of the advanced nations of the world, not militarily but in education and material development, which will give best scope for the spiritual culture of India. The nation wants a highly trained personnel alike in scientific, technical and social fields. The nation is anxious to train all the backward classes to come up to the level of the advanced classes, but the nation may not be satisfied with the supply of highly trained personnel which is derived from the backward classes only. The hunger and thirst for men of the highest education and training is insatiable, and the nation may not deny itself the services of persons who could be trained from amongst the upper classes also. And, just as we are insistent that we shall have the services of the best pilots, best doctors and best engineers, to whatever class they may belong, the nation is equally anxious that it should train every person who

has the potential capacity of responding to the training. We cannot, therefore, prevent young men and young women from the advanced classes, from being trained to serve the nation and humanity.

48. Social justice demands that the backward classes are not denied the chance of being similarly trained, but they cannot start with demanding a monopoly of seventy per cent for the chances of being trained for higher services.

49. If I have lent my full support to the demand for seventy per cent of reservations in higher technical institutes of learning for the backward classes it is not because I want to turn the upper classes into a new under-privileged class, but because I want opportunities for higher training to be multiplied with break-neck speed. It is only when the traditionally more promising sections of society are kept out of higher learning that those in authority and power will shed their traditional lethargy.

50. In the same spirit I once suggested that the Bhangis of a town living in filthy *bastis* should all be shifted *en bloc* to stay in college hostels; it is not that I did not want college education and amenities of residence for the students. I knew that only if all the college hostels were requisitioned for the accommodation of the most useful servants of society, viz., the Bhangis, that society would bestir itself and make herculean efforts for having adequate housing accommodation for the students. No mere agitation could drive the city fathers to build better quarters for the Bhangis.

51. In the same way, it is only when most of the available seats in institutions of higher learning are occupied by eligible candidates from the backward classes that Government and social leaders will come forward to start more and more institutions of technical education for training students denied admission into the higher institutes simply because they happen to belong to the upper and more promising communities.

### **The American Policy**

52. Having thus given my viewpoint regarding reservations both in Government service and in institutes of Higher Technical Education, I am tempted to give below the American policy of Fair Practice in Employment. America is a land of many races and nationalities. The Anglo-Saxons, the French, the Germans, the Latin races, the Jews, the Negroes, and the aboriginal Red-Indians, with a microscopic sprinkling of a few Asians, all thrown together, constitute a colossal problem which they are trying to solve in America. This is how they regulate employment under the merit system.

53. "The long-established policy of the Federal Government, under the merit system of Federal employment, has been to make appointments to Federal positions with sole regard to merit and fitness."

54. "This policy was reinforced in 1948, when President Truman issued Executive Order 9980 setting forth for the Federal Service the basic policy of fair employment without discrimination because of race, colour, religion or national origin. The fair employment policy does not mean that any fixed proportion of persons of different races,

religions or national origins must be given Federal employment. It distinctly and definitely does not mean that any persons of inferior merit or fitness shall be pushed ahead of other employees or applicants or shielded from the consequences of their failures or shortcomings whether members of a majority group, or members of minority group which in the past have suffered from unfair discrimination. No applicant or employee having merit and fitness shall be refused or deprived of employment or earned promotion by reason of his or her race, colour, religion, or national origin. On the same principle, no one lacking merit or fitness shall receive preferment for the same reasons. The fair employment policy is a double-edged tool and as such must be used with special care and good judgement."

55. Some such policy will have to be followed by our country also when the unhappy but necessary period of reservations is over. We hope that by then, the various castes will have been amalgamated and there will also be free intermarriages between various denominational groups. Not a mere co-existence of communities but National Solidarity is what we are aiming at.

### **Remedial Measures on Non-Caste Bases**

56. According to the terms of reference to the Commission, we were asked to consider whether any sections of the people of the territory of India, in addition to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, should be treated as socially and educationally backward classes. The words specifically used are 'classes and sections' of the people, and not 'castes'; and yet, as explained in the body of the report the word 'sections and classes' can in the present context mean nothing but castes, and no other interpretation is feasible.

57. It must be admitted, however, that, taking the wording of the terms of reference, we are not precluded from interpreting the words 'sections and classes of the people' in their widest significance even excluding the idea of caste. We feel we were justified in accepting the traditional interpretation. We were warned by well-wishers of the country that investigations into caste may encourage people to be caste-conscious, and thus increase the atmosphere of communalism. Following the analogy of the proverb, viz. 'using the thorn to remove a thorn,' we held that the evils of caste could be removed by measures which could be considered in terms of caste alone.

58. The result of our inquiry is that caste-consciousness, caste loyalties and caste aspirations, have increased throughout the country and some of us were responsible for encouraging people to think that the backward classes could be organised into a party to wield political power through universal adult franchise. (That position has been crystallised into my article "Emergence of a New Leadership". It expresses the hope and ambition of the backward classes, and it is also a warning to others regarding the atmosphere in the country and the attitude which they must cultivate in order to meet the emergency).

59. But, we cannot be oblivious to the dangers to the solidarity of the country. Communalism and Casteism are bound to destroy the unity of the nation and narrow down the aspirations of our people.

60. Two years of experience have convinced us of the dangers of the spread of casteism and the warning of the well-wishers of the country have also led us, almost towards the end of our investigation, to the conclusion that it would have been better if we could determine the criteria of backwardness on principles other than caste.

61. We feel that the investigation into the backwardness in the nation and of the people ought not to have been confined to finding out such sections of the people or such classes, castes, communities or tribes as are backward. We have come to the conclusion that this group investigation is repugnant to the spirit of democracy.

62. In a democracy, it is always the individual (not even the family) which is the unit. Democracy thrives best when, on the one hand we recognise and respect the personality of the individual and on the other we consider the well-being of the totality comprising the nation.

63. Groups or sections, less than the totality of the nation, should not be encouraged to develop group loyalty as otherwise, the spirit of democracy is undermined.

64. Moreover, the nation has decided to establish a classless and casteless society, which also demands that backwardness should be studied from the point of view of the individual and, at the most, that of a family. Any other unit will lead to caste or class aggrandisement.

65. Let us therefore, try to find criteria of backwardness that could eschew ideas of caste or class.

66. The following may be accepted as criteria of backwardness. It is a rough list and needs careful scrutiny, and yet these considerations are given below by way of guidance.

It would be more convenient to write the criteria in two columns showing the anti-thesis between the Backward and the Non-Backward.

*Backward*

1. Women.
2. Residents of rural area.
3. Those who are driven to the necessity of working with their own hands.
4. Those labouring under the sun and in open air.
5. Landless labourers.
6. Unskilled labour.
7. Not having sufficient, or any capital.
8. Working as mere clerks.
9. Menial service under private persons.

*Non-Backward*

1. Men.
2. Residents of urban area.
3. Those whose work consists of supervision of manual workers.
4. Those working under shade after the pattern of the white-collared fraternity.
5. Landed peasantry.
6. Skilled labour and high craftsmanship.
7. Commanding sufficient capital.
8. Following some learned profession.
9. Government service of the upper grades.

### *Backward*

### *Non-Backward*

10. Having poor and uneducated parents, lacking ambition and having no vision.

11. Lacking in resources.

12. Belonging to, or condemned to live in, inaccessible and backward areas.

13. Illiterate.

14. Not having capacity to understand modern times and the facilities for self-improvement available in society.

15. Belief in magic, superstition and fate.

10. Having educated parents or guardians with an atmosphere of self-confidence and culture.

11. Having adequate income and resources.

12. Enjoying amenities of modern civilization.

13. Having a fair amount of education.

14. Being well-equipped and alert to profit by modern conditions and opportunities.

15. Belief in science and the understanding of the law of cause and effect.

### **Remedies for Removing Backwardness**

1. *Women*—They should be given special help in education so that they may come up to the level of men, and they should be given all opportunities in public service by giving them equality of status.

They should be given security of tenure in service during periods of pregnancy and child birth.

2. *Rural areas*—Rural areas must be made attractive by better means of communication, better and healthy amenities etc. Educational institutions in sufficient numbers should be planted in rural areas, including a few rural universities.

3. *Working with hands*—All education should involve the use of hands and the cultivation of the use of fingers for scientific precision and artistic grace.

All work of a supervisory nature should be combined with some amount of manual labour in company of the regular manual workers.

Nobody should be allowed to be a boss unless he is prepared to do some manual work also.

4. *Working under the sun and in open air*—All amenities and comforts for those working in shade and those working under the sun should be equalised as much as possible, so that preference for 'shaded' life may automatically cease.

Difference in the emoluments or wages of the two should also be reduced to a minimum.

5. *Land*—Landless labourers should be given every facility of possessing some land, either individually or collectively, and nobody should be allowed to possess land unless he is prepared to hold the plough in his hand and work on the land for the major part of the year.

6. *Unskilled labour*—Special training should be given to the unskilled labourers to improve their efficiency, and they should be encouraged to raise the standard of efficiency, precision, dexterity, grace and quickness. The unskilled labourers of today, should also be allowed some leisure in which they could develop some kind of craftsmanship as a hobby.

All labour should be educated labour. The labouring men should be able to read and write, enjoy and understand the newspapers of the day. He must be encouraged to cultivate self-respect and ever-increasing efficiency for himself and his children.

He should be given educational allowance for himself for some time, and afterwards, for his children.

7. *Capital*—Hereafter, there should be a ceiling on individual capital, all additional capital being socialised for the good of all.

8. *Clerkship and the learned professions*—Even mere administration should be regarded as a learned profession, along with that of the doctor, pleader, engineer and the educationist.

Clerks should be encouraged to help in evolving club-life, where they could improve their prospects by picking up new things by which they could add to their capacity and social utility.

9. *Menials, other grades and classes of service*—Employment of menials must be discouraged. Everyone, whether high or low, should be expected to look after his own room, his office, his dress and the carrying of things from one place to another, etc.

The use of menial service should be confined to the needs of only the sick, the babies and the extremely old.

Heavy work, of course, will have to be tackled by collective effort.

There should also be collective service instead of personal menial service. For instance, instead of keeping a servant to do my marketing, I should ask the shop-keeper to maintain servants who would go to all the customers of the shop delivering things purchased by them.

Hours of work of the menial servants, the nurses, watchmen, waiters, etc., should be limited, and where employment is steady, there should be arrangement for regular promotion and pension after a period of service.

10. *Parentage*—There should be an army of social servants or social workers who would act in the place of parents for many children. This career should attract best men and best women. The State should be in the place of parents for looking after the youths of the land, giving them proper training and cultivating their ambition to be useful members of society.

11. *Resources*—The need for resources will be reduced to a minimum, if workshops and similar fields of work are socialised.

Till then the State should provide or lend or cheapen facilities.

12. *Inaccessible Areas*—The State should have a survey of all such areas, and hasten to have all-weather good pucca roads and approach roads as early as possible, and where population is sparse, the people should be asked to give their quota of the expenses through manual labour i.e. *Shramdan*, care being taken always never to build a pucca road unless it had with it the installation of the telephone also. This is essential for the safety of the traffic and for military needs also.

For mountainous areas there should be more of bridges of sufficient width for buses to ply.

13. *Literacy*—People should not wait for the Government to start primary and basic schools. Social workers should enthusiastically start literacy campaign work. High school and college students should be encouraged, as part of their curriculum, to go to nearby villages, and spend a month or two of their vacation towards the spread of literacy. Special books should be published by the State, showing easy ways for the spread of literacy and general knowledge.

14. *Superstitious Beliefs, etc.*—It is difficult to assess the backwardness due to superstitious beliefs, but this kind of backwardness is spread over the whole world. This can be overcome by regular and systematic teaching of science and inductive logic. A sustained campaign against blind belief in magic, fate and superstitions, should be carried on. Much of caste prejudices and race prejudices could be removed, and racial amity fostered by a systematic attack on superstitious beliefs and blind prejudices, religious or otherwise.

15. *Understanding of Modern Times and its Amenities*—This is the crux of most of the backwardness amongst the masses. Systematic classes must be held throughout the country, and all the educational methods and psychological aids should be utilised to enthuse, both social servants and the masses, for the spread of correct ideas about health, use of money, systems of administration, laws of psychology, sociology, ethics and spirituality.

Group prejudices and race prejudices should be analysed. Religious beliefs should be subjected to a close but sympathetic criticism of reason and logic. Latest instances of social prejudices should be analysed in detail and their hollowness exposed and then, people should be encouraged consciously to befriend those who are distant geographically, psychologically and culturally, thus leading to universal brotherhood and familyhood of all races.

### **Difficulties of the Next Census**

67. We have recommended that the next census should give all the necessary information about castes and sub-castes. It would certainly be a valuable material for the sociologists and the anthropologists. Social reformers will profit by it. Demography the world over will be thankful if all this information is supplied. But a lurking suspicion is asserting itself in my mind: Can we do it?

68. A Government can demand co-operation from its citizens and require the people to give certain information and statistics to the best of their knowledge, but can census officers force a citizen to give information which he is not prepared to volunteer? There



is a growing body of citizens in India who refuse to accept caste, and who may refuse to tell or acknowledge the caste to which they happened to belong in the past.

69. Another question is: Can census authorities prevent a man from giving his caste according to his own concept? The Sonar (goldsmith) in Maharashtra, for instance, may declare his caste simply as Brahman. The same Sonar in Assam may declare his caste as Harijan. A Brahman, recently, during our tour, declared that till yesterday he was a Brahman, but now he elects to be a Harijan. 'If Mahatma Gandhi could do it why not I?', was his argument. There are many priests amongst the Harijans who have started calling themselves Brahmans. Who can prevent them from doing so? The great saint poet of Maharashtra, Sant Tukaram was a Bania by caste, but he always called himself a Sudra. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel belonged to one of the dominant communities of Gujrat, viz. Patidars. There was a case in court, and the question was whether the Patidars should be regarded as Kshatrias or Vaishyas. By occupation they are farmers. Leaders of the community came to Sardar Patel and requested him to give his evidence before the court. He said he had no objection; only he would tell the court that the Patidars are Shudras. Even a Brahman may elect to be a Shudra or a Harijan.

70. The next question is: Can a secular Government force a citizen to belong or not to belong to a particular caste? A Brahman, if he becomes a Muslim or a Christian, can say that he is no longer a Brahman. Christianity and Islam will not thank him if he persisted in giving his caste as Brahman even after conversion, and the State will have no option but to record his caste as he gives it. Now, is it necessary for a Hindu Brahman to renounce his Hinduism if he is keen on dropping his caste? And can the census clerks and enumerators put down the caste of a man according to their conception in spite of the protest of the person concerned? Is it not the duty of the enumerator honestly to note down whatever information is volunteered by the citizen without trying to consider whether the information volunteered is traditionally acceptable or not? At the last census, when a census man asked me about my religion, I told him that I belonged to all religions and I accepted all religions as mine. I do not know what he wrote actually in the census returns, but I think I have a right to prosecute him, if he puts down anything which I have not volunteered.

71. There are innumerable instances where poor and ignorant citizens do not know what answer to give to certain questions, and the enumerator writes down whatever suits his own predilection or fancy. I know of cases where some people gave Hindustani as their language, and the enumerator put it down as Hindi.

72. When caste becomes politically important and parties for elections are formed on the predilections of caste, census operations will become as complicated as elections and the facts given may be challenged as not being above suspicion. I remember how, during a previous census in Assam, there was a complaint made by many people that the figures of Muslims were greatly inflated; and that is why the census returns although ready and printed, were not

published on the ground that the information may be misused by the enemy, it being war time.

73. Caste cannot stick to a man as his age, colour or sex. Caste, like religion, could be changed, as often as one likes, and there is no theocratic power in India left today which could regulate or challenge the professions of an individual. I do not think a secular State can insist on noting down the caste of a person. He may not own it and society may not recognize what the individual claimed.

74. Recently, some people belonging to the Scheduled Caste gave their caste name as Harijans. That was of course accepted, but then the State Government turned round and said that since the name Harijan is not to be found in the list of Scheduled Castes issued by the President of India, those who called themselves Harijans could not get the scholarships and concessions that were reserved for Scheduled Castes!

75. Then there is further trouble during the last fifty years and more. People have started giving new, high-sounding, and what they regard as much more respectable names, to their own caste. The Chamar, for instance, may call himself Ravidas, that being the name of a saint who was born in that community. The barbers prefer to call themselves Sena. We can have no quarrel if such a change of name of a caste created no confusion. But, take the instance of the great sage Valmiki. People say that he was originally a Brahman, but he became a fisherman, and joined the ranks of the highway-men and started murdering and looting wayfarers. Now, any Brahman can easily take Valmiki as his surname. The fishermen can call themselves Valmiki, and so can the ex-criminal tribes people. Today, some of the scavenging castes also call themselves Valmiki. Now, what are the census authorities to do? And, what is the department of education also to do?

76. English spelling and typographical mistakes also have created a number of castes, which also has led to strange confusion. Dasa is a community amongst the Shudra. Dasa means a servant or a slave. Pious people use the suffix Dasa when they accept some name of the diety as their own. Even men of the upper castes thus call themselves Dasa. Purushottamdas, Purandaradas, Prabhudas, are instances in point. And, as irony would have it, some of the Jains were divided into two groups of *ten* families and *twenty* families, popularly known as Dasa and Visa meaning ten and twenty respectively. Now, Dasa meaning ten, was also spelt DASA. So, the Dasa amongst the Jains, a flourishing mercantile community, were confused with the Shudra community, Dasa. Such difficulties could of course, be obviated by using the *Nagri* spelling of words, but it is not easy for the next census to secure detailed and accurate figures and information about castes.

77. The problem of caste and religion is bound to be further complicated by the ever growing number of inter-marriages between persons of different castes and different religions.

78. What shall be the recognized caste of persons so marrying, and that of their progeny? The old simple rule was that the wife necessarily took the caste and religion of the husband and the

children also did the same. But men marrying wives from lower castes were oftentimes outcasted and were relegated to the status of a lower caste.

79. The Roman Catholics say that if any of their girls married a non-Christian, they would not object provided that children of such union were brought up as Catholics. Sometimes the marrying couple do not wish to disturb each other's caste or religion and the children are left to choose their religion for themselves. And we shall soon have a body of citizens who will declare that they belong to no caste and no religion.

80. It will be equally difficult to ascertain the different names—old and new—of the same caste and sub-caste. Propagandists will be active in persuading people to choose particular names and formulae.

81. It is already being proposed that people going in for mixed marriages should claim to belong to the lowest class and there is no authority in the land, universally recognized, that can regulate the caste of people hereafter.

82. Thus the confusion and anarchy of opinion about all communal matters is going to make the work of the next census well nigh impossible.

### **Dominant Communities**

83. The history of the past hundred years shows that in the beginning one or two upper communities claimed that they represented the whole nation and they stood for the best interests of the people. This claim was justified in the case of a fair number of individuals belonging to those communities, but the communities as such were never free from self-seeking and self-aggrandisement. The claims of these leading communities were soon challenged by the people for various reasons. The leaders threw the blame on the foreign rulers and missionaries, complaining that these foreigners were driving a wedge between the natural leaders and the masses.

84. The claim for leadership of the people was next taken up by half a dozen other communities who were educated and modernised enough to take to education, and who attained a fair amount of social prestige. They now claimed to be the natural leaders of society and claimed also to represent the masses. A large number of these people also were justified in their claim, which they have proved by great sacrifices during the Swaraj struggle for independence. They gave up social prestige and many advantages without any regret.

And yet, these upper communities could not help being accused of being selfish and cruelly indifferent to the happiness and progress of the backward classes.

85. Social reformers and social revolutionaries who are out to break the hierarchy of caste and the privileges enjoyed so far by the upper classes from amongst Hindus, Muslims and Christians, have come from all communities including of course, the upper castes. Spiritual leaders have arisen in our country from all classes, from the highest to the lowest. Social leaders have appeared from

almost every dominant community to atone for the sins of omission and commission of their own kith and kin. But, unfortunately, these have not combined their forces and they did not dream, so far, of revolutionising the whole social structure.

86. Dominant communities the world over have been influenced by the ideals and practices of mediaeval times. The work of the social revolutionaries has been, so far, of an individualistic type. Organized forces have so far, failed to be guided by spiritual and humanistic ideals.

87. Even today the upper communities are being sought to be segregated from the masses by a few dominant individuals from amongst the backward communities, and they are trying to drive a wedge between, not only the upper classes and the lower classes, but they are trying to segregate the best amongst the social revolutionaries on the ground that a good many of them happen to belong to the advanced classes.

88. These dominant people resent any further analysis of the backward classes into the Dominant and the Victims. Self-interest drives them to raise a hue and cry that a wedge is being driven between the various sections of the backward classes. There is a movement to ignore caste distinctions, separately from amongst the advanced classes and the backward classes. They want society to be divided into two simple antagonistic groups of 'Advanced' and 'Backward'.

89. It is common knowledge that if the Harijans in villages are harassed today it is not so much the Brahman or the Bania of the village who harasses them. These communities are too passive and shrewd to take the law into their own hands, and do the dirty job of belabouring the Harijans. It is the dominant amongst the socially and educationally backward that want to maintain their social superiority of a feudal type, and it is these who are keen on maintaining the hierarchy of high and low. It is they who beat up men from the lower communities if they carry the marriage procession on horse-backs or in vehicles. It is they who harass women of the backward classes if they wear ornaments and clean dress.

90. We have in our Report, given a list of backward classes and put a star against each of those communities which are extremely backward. Those communities generally live in rural areas, and they are mostly the victims of the domination of the privileged and dominant communities among the backward classes. It should be an irony and a mockery of justice to allow such dominant communities to claim to be the natural leaders of these starred communities who are the victims of their domination. By no stretch of imagination could these dominant communities justify their claim to have certain seats and advantages reserved for them on the strength of population figures of the victim communities; and the victim communities will not thank Government if educated members of these dominant communities are given responsible posts in Government with the hope that they will protect the best interest of the starred communities. Manipulation of population figures without giving due consideration to these social and moral factors will end in miscarriage of social justice.

91. It is not impossible to find out who amongst the upper castes and dominant communities have given up their mediaeval prestige and are prepared to atone for the sins of the previous generations and are prepared, in a spirit of brotherliness, to help the backward people to rise. These could be trusted to befriend and serve the starred communities as well as others.

92. But it is not easy to guarantee that representatives of the dominant communities will not tyrannise over the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes and the starred communities. Tyrants and bullies cannot be made into protectors of the people by being put at the head of the backward classes.

93. The spirit of domination is a vice and a curse. It is a disease that is spread over the whole world. There are dominant races who victimise others. The European nations have shown that they could do when they got the chance of spreading over the whole world. Priests of old have dominated an ignorant and superstitious humanity. In India today, there are dominant communities even amongst the untouchables. In Maharashtra we heard the complaint that the Mahars amongst the untouchables dominated all the rest. In northern India a similar complaint was levelled against the Chamars. In the extreme south the Ezhavas and Nadars are said to dominate other Scheduled Castes.

94. It can safely be said that those who possess large tracts of land, those who have money enough to lend, those who have brains to create quarrels and factions amongst the people, and those who have the tradition of wielding governmental power, are all dominant people in rural areas. Northern India has given us the formula of AJGAR, a word formed by taking the initial letters of the four communities—Ahir, Jat, Gujjar and Rajput (Ajgar means the Boa-constrictor, that quietly swallows and leisurely digests many animals. Such Ajgar communities are to be found in both the upper and the lower castes. In Sind, the Amils dominated all the rest, whether Hindus or Muslims. In Gujerat, it was the Nagar, the Patidar and the Anavil who are said to have dominated all the rest; and sometimes, the Patanwadias or Padhiars have retaliated in desperation. In Maharashtra, besides the Brahman it is the Maratha who claimed to be the ruling community in the villages, and the Prabhu, that dominated all other communities. In Karnataka the Lingayat and the Vokkaliga, in Andhra the Kamma and the Reddy, in Tamilnad the Mudaliar and the Naidu, in Kerala, the Nair and the Ezhava, in Bengal the Kayastha and the Baidya, in Assam, the Ahom, in Bihar the Rajput and the Bhumihar, in Orissa, the Khandayat and Karnam, etc., etc., are declared to be dominant—the list is neither exhaustive nor authoritative. Some of these communities might have been accused by mistake or by prejudice, but the fact remains that there are certain communities that are dominant. The phenomenon obtains throughout the world and it is the special mission of the present age to give courage to victim communities to resist all tyranny. In England the mercantile community successfully resisted the domination of the feudal Barons during the Industrial revolution and recently, labour is successfully resisting the domination of both.

95. It is, therefore, essential that no dominating community should be allowed to claim to be the protector of the weaker sections. It is

only the good men from every community, men who are imbued with a sense of social justice, who can forget caste prejudice, are prepared to surrender their privileges and who can combine to usher in a new era of social justice and universal familyhood, that can be the natural leaders and protectors of the helpless, mute and suffering masses.

96. We have to recognize that there are certain communities who are financially well off, and yet, are educationally backward, and a good many of them have been dominating society, especially of the rural areas. In the religious or orthodox hierarchy, they may not belong to the upper castes, but by their wealth and prestige, they are dominant. Sometimes they possess vast acres of land; sometimes they have amassed sufficient capital to work as money-lenders. These landlords and money-lenders dominate the whole village scene. Upper castes like the Brahmans and the Banias have to bend before the will of these dominant communities. Even Government servants have to respect their wishes. Government servants are often-times coaxed, cajoled, bribed, and so made to connive at the traditional domination and bullying of these against the low and subservient classes.

97. I consented to include in the backward classes list such dominant communities who although not socially backward, could be regarded so because of their having neglected education. I had hoped that I could classify them into a separate sub-head and help them to fight successfully the privileges of the upper communities.

98. I wanted so to classify the backward classes that the dominant communities amongst the officially backward could successfully put up a fight against the upper castes, and yet, become impotent to tyrannise over the weaker sections amongst the backward.

99. I did not succeed in this effort because I could not carry conviction to my colleagues that these dominant communities must be segregated if the victims of domination have to be saved.

### **Political Leadership**

100. In my own province of Maharashtra, new political and social life began with able leaders like Justice Ranade, Telang, Prof. Bhandarkar, the Hon'ble Gokhale, and Lokamanya Tilak. They started an all-round movement of political, social, religious and industrial reform and regeneration. They naturally and justifiably claimed to represent the whole nation. They got full co-operation from noble persons like Dadabhoy Nowrojee, Sir Pherozechah Mehta, Badruddin Tyabji, Barrister Baptista and others.

101. But a movement soon started, called the non-Brahman movement, headed by some leaders of the Maratha community, like the Raja of Kolhapur. This movement was to some extent, anti-Congress and pro-British. They also got full support from good many Muslims, Christians and others. The leaders of the non-Brahman movement asserted that the so-called leaders of the Congress were chiefly Brahmans and therefore, communal. Whereas they themselves represented the whole nation.

102. This movement travelled south and there also, the non-Brahman movement included the Muslims and the Christians. They

claimed to represent the whole nation. But, unfortunately, they fought shy of the nationalist movement led by the Congress.

103. With the advent of Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, in the political field, the situation changed. The non-Brahman following discovered where their real interest lay. They saw that Mahatma Gandhi and Vallabhbhai Patel were non-Brahmans, and yet, they could lead the Congress and work for the betterment of the masses. And all classes worked under them. The Brahmans were the first to join their forces.

104. Orthodox leaders of the old non-Brahman movement basked in the sunshine of governmental favours, and a few families of some of the leading communities, advanced considerably. There was a general awakening in the masses to rise educationally and also socially. There were caste conferences everywhere in the country. The general trend of these conferences was to collect funds for instituting scholarships for children of their own communities. They ransacked ancient history, real or fanciful, to upgrade themselves and traced their descent from some Brahman or Kshatriya *rishi* or king of old. They also asked the Census Department to help them in collecting caste-wise figures to ascertain the strength of their population.

105. With the growth of political life and spread of education, many communities from amongst the non-Brahmans became advanced enough (although in Mysore, today, the Government recognises only the Brahmans as the advanced community and all others are officially backward, although the prominent amongst these backward communities have monopolised all political power. It is they who manage the universities also. They dominate the learned professions and trade. The Brahmans, although they have not been driven to the wall, have consented to occupy the second place). In northern India, as also in southern India, now, the position is that about half a dozen or a dozen communities are bracketed with the Brahmans. They are the leaders of today. They are now declared, of course justifiably, to be the advanced communities.

106. Their leadership of the whole nation is now being sought to be challenged.

107. It is now the turn of the dominant (and sometimes bullying) communities and individuals amongst the backward classes to claim to be the leaders of the bulk of the nation. As yet they are not claiming to be the leaders of the whole nation. With communistic ideals they could certainly do so, but today, they exclude the advanced communities from amongst them and they regard themselves to be the leaders of all the backward communities. They resent the backward communities being classified into—

- (i) slightly backward;
- (ii) more backward; and
- (iii) those who are leading a sub-human existence (We have put a star before such communities in our list).

They say, that this would create a division in their ranks. They want all the backward classes to be organized in a solid phalanx against the advanced communities and even the most nationalistic

and least communal from among the advanced communities are **not** allowed the right to speak for, or represent the backward communities. They are allowed to serve the backward classes no doubt, but they must do so under the guidance and leadership of these dominant amongst the backward.

108. If public life is thus allowed to be developed into a struggle between rival factions, national solidarity and strength will be weakened. The dominant amongst the backward hope to capture power and rule over the whole country. There is nothing wrong in this ambition provided they do not pit the backward classes against the advanced communities and create a conflict. Let them accept the unity and homogeneity of the nation and train themselves to lead the whole nation. Such leadership is already theirs if they can serve the whole nation including the backward classes loyally and not imitate the selfish among the upper classes in aggrandising themselves on the strength of the numbers of the blind following of the extremely backward, they can always count upon the co-operation of the best amongst the advanced classes. If they do not follow such wise policy, all administration, public life, industries and commerce, etc., may be jeopardised, and then the extremely backward will discover that they have been duped. This will give rise to a revolt from the bottom which will ultimately end in chaos.

109. I have painted this dismal picture, not as a prophet but simply as a warning to all concerned. The advanced communities especially, should recognise the signs of the times and shed their sense of superiority and aloofness, and monopolistic tendency. They should befriend one and all without any distinction. They should encourage inter-caste marriages at all levels. If no social conflict is contemplated and the Sarvodaya ideal of working for the upliftment of all, beginning with the lowest of the low, is the source of inspiration, then it is immaterial to whose hands the leadership is transferred. It is much better, if new communities are allowed to try their hand at leadership. Only those who like Nehru, are above communal considerations and even nationalistic considerations, should be allowed, to formulate the policy of the nation. It is no use challenging the leadership of the best in the land by searching out the community to which they belong, and then accusing them that they are monopolising leadership for the upper classes. All monopoly must be broken even if it is fully justified and opportunities for service must be assured to all sections of the population.

### **Ministry of A. B. C.**

110. One important unanimous recommendation of ours is regarding the formation of a separate Ministry for the amelioration of the condition of all the backward classes.

111. The problem of backwardness is not merely one of serving a few minorities here and there, but it is a problem of the reconstruction of society itself. It is a change over from the mediaeval feudal basis to a modern democratic society based on equal respect for the personality of every individual. Far-reaching changes in human relations are necessary. If our recommendation in this regard, is accepted, the Government will have to find for this ministry a



statesman of the first rank, having widest sympathy, tact, courage and vision. Some one of the calibre of Shri Dhebar alone can do justice to this task of effecting a social revolution, envisaged in our report.

112. The *Panchkroshi* schools for the initiation of a novel type of Rural Basic Education will tax the genius of a true educationist.

113. The Samata Ashrams, recommended in the Report, will, it is hoped, herald the beginning of Sarvodaya Society.

114. The revival of village industries and handicrafts, on a nation-wide co-operative basis, will instil new life into the masses.

115. The artisan when rehabilitated, will reflect the culture of a non-violent, rural civilisation.

116. The whole movement for the liquidation of all backwardness will have to be lifted from the level of mere job-hunting and the impotent resentment at being frustrated in this pursuit.

### **An Explanation**

117. I have always held that universal adult franchise is the best panacea against many social and political ills from which the masses suffer. The adult franchise assures even the meanest of the citizens that he has a stake in the country and that he is being governed with his own consent. I am proud that the Constituent Assembly accepted Mahatmaji's suggestion and incorporated universal adult franchise as a cardinal principle of our Constitution. By this franchise all power is already transferred to the masses. If they are not today able to wield this power, it is because they lack education and wise political guidance. I have always said that giving an additional weapon in weak hands is no remedy. I am definitely against giving special political representation or powers to anybody, over and above the universal adult franchise.

118. Some representatives of the backward classes complained that the representatives do not really represent their case because the masses do not know how to choose their representatives. I told them that their plea amounted to a suggestion that the masses do not deserve to have the vote, and therefore, it should be taken away from them.

119. This has been interpreted by certain interested persons to mean that I am against the backward classes being given any political power. It is no use answering each and every misrepresentation. A thing which has no substance in truth can safely be allowed to die a natural death. I know it is not going to harm me even temporarily because I am seeking no political power or leadership. I am also accused of saying that the masses might sell their country to India's enemies. The masses, as a whole, have never been known to sell their country, and if they did, nothing on earth can prevent them from doing so. It is generally the unscrupulous opportunists who claim to represent the people that are likely to sell their country, and this ignoble characteristic is not the monopoly of either the upper classes or the lower classes. People have been found here and there, since ancient times, to be traitors to their country. The only remedy lies in building a strong democracy, and cultivating a high

standard of political morals. Oftentimes, people sell their country through lack of political wisdom and shrewd ability to detect the wiles of the country's enemies. The remedy against this danger also is political maturity which comes only through wielding of political power by the masses.

120. In the final analysis, I stand for a social order in which neither religion nor political power are organized to control the destinies of humanity. Just as we stand for a secular democracy, I stand for a non-political social order based on mutual love, trust, respect and service. But, this has nothing to do with the universal adult franchise which I accept whole-heartedly.

121. Some people might say that our Report reads more like a manifesto on behalf of the backward classes than a document giving the views of all sections of people and arriving at a considered and balanced decision by the Commission. I admit that the Report could have been written in a different way, but we thought it better to put it in the way we did, because we wanted to support our conclusions by mentioning the feelings and grievances of the backward classes. It is they who are neglected and not the upper classes. There is another reason. The upper classes, either out of apathy or out of generosity for the backward classes, did not care to come out with their views before the Commission. They perhaps thought that this was another enquiry on behalf of another minority, and they had no objection if some provision was made for these people also. In fact, many people even in responsible positions believed and still believe, that the Commission was out to enquire into the condition of the Harijans and the Girijans. Many people, highly placed in Government and in public life, repeated this misconception to our great astonishment and regret. It was to warn such people that I was driven to broadcast an article about 'the Emergence of a New Leadership'. Even this article was noticed, mainly by the representatives of the backward classes. This article was followed by a radio talk in which I pleaded for an atmosphere of brotherly co-operation and not one of antagonism and social conflict.

122. Towards the end of our enquiry, we have come to the conclusion that caste, communal or denominational considerations need not be introduced in the educational policy. A progressive, modern welfare State, cannot afford to tolerate educational backwardness anywhere in the State. In most of the modern States, more than 60 per cent of the scholars receive full educational aid. In India, it should be possible for the State to give educational aid to all the poor and deserving students in the country, irrespective of caste, sex or denomination. Whenever it is necessary to show preference it must be for women and for students of rural areas. The present preference for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes should be continued for some time, but the time has come when all the poor and deserving should, and could, be helped, so that no communal consideration need be introduced in the field of education.

123. It will be recognized that the Report gives expression both to the fears and aspirations that have no bearing for the future. It is but natural that backward people should think of their woes of the past. Very few people have the gift of realising the gathering forces of tomorrow and those that suffered in the past cannot easily

begin to believe any glowing picture of the future. It is not by criticising them for their narrowness of outlook, but by introducing them as honoured members of the nation, to the benefits of the glorious future we are building, that they will shed their fears of the past and only then that the narrow and pigmy aspirations which they had hugged to their bosom will give place to new and brighter hope.

124. Lastly, it is my pleasant duty to thank all those who contributed to the success of our labours.

125. To begin with, I must thank the various co-opted members who, even at the shortest notice, consented to tour with the Commission in their respective States and helped us with their local knowledge.

126. I must also thank the various public leaders and representatives of the various institutions serving the backward classes. Some of them were extremely frank and made us ponder over the many and conflicting sides of the problem.

127. The officers who were deputed by the State Governments, to accompany the Commission were uniformly helpful and obliging and lightened our task considerably.

128. We were able to discuss freely and frankly with the Ministers of the various States. We are grateful for the courtesy shown to us by them.

129. I must here express my personal and heartfelt gratitude to all my colleagues for their wonderful co-operation and consideration. They were kind enough to put up with my many short-comings and irregularities.

130. The whole work of the office was shouldered by the Member-Secretary, Shri Arunangshu De, thus sparing my time for the main task.

131. The official secretaries from Shri Raman to Shri Nagar helped us with their intimate knowledge of governmental machinery and its procedure.

132. Everything depended on the willing, able and enthusiastic co-operation of the section officers. I must thank the Government for selecting Shri Gupta and Shri Sareen for our work. They displayed tact and understanding at every step, and with their own hard work, inculcated the same spirit in the staff.

133. The Research Section was started as my special hobby, but it soon developed into an important section. The Research Officers worked as hard as the rest of the staff, collecting and collating valuable material.

134. Shri S. K. Murthy worked as my Private-Secretary. He worked diligently throughout the two years of the Commission's work. He could be trusted with any confidential work.

135. I must not forget the silent and devoted service of the office staff down to the peons who oftentimes had to work hard beyond

office hours. My heart goes out to them in their domestic joys and anxieties.

136. I must express my special obligation to Shri Datar (the Deputy Minister for Home Affairs) and Shri Laxmidas Shrikant (Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) for taking a keen personal interest in our work.

137. And most of all I am grateful to you, Rashtrapatiji, for giving us this valuable opportunity of studying the condition of a neglected and yet most lovable section of our nation and of serving them through this enquiry.

Yours Sincerely  
KAKA KALELKAR

*Chairman  
Backward Classes Commission*

*Post Script 1***The Handloom Weaver and the Ambar Yarn**

We have unanimously come to the conclusion that for the economic, educational and cultural rehabilitation of one of the biggest backward classes in India, it is essential that the village textile industry should be revived. We have unanimously recommended that first preference should be given to the Khadi industry and nothing should be done that may come in the way of the full and speedy development of Khadi. But the present limitations of our resources have set a limit to the production of Khadi in India. The remaining non-Khadi sector of textiles should, therefore, be reserved for the handloom, to the exclusion of mill or foreign cloth. We have recommended, in effect, that mill cloth should be prohibited from competing either with Khadi or handloom cloth. The mills may be helped to export their products to neighbouring countries.

2. In this connection, we have recommended that wherever Khadi is not able to occupy a field, Government should arrange for the adequate supply of mill yarn, both coloured and uncoloured at reasonable rates to the handloom weavers. We also recommended that State Governments may start spinning mills to ensure such regular supply of yarn.

3. But a new and efficient instrument of production of yarn has recently been developed. It is known as Ambar Charkha. The strength, evenness and durability of yarn from this Charkha is in no way inferior to the mill yarn. Ambar yarn is definitely and decidedly superior in strength and evenness to hand-spun yarn. The Ambar Charkha is practically a domestic mill, for the production of good yarn.

4. I am certain that my colleagues would not have objected to the following proposal if it was placed before them. at the time of finalizing our Report. I knew about the Ambar Charkha, but was not confident that it could be recommended as a practical proposition for the full supply of yarn that is necessary to make all the handlooms work. but my recent visit to the Sarvodaya Sammelan at Puri, and my detailed discussions with people that know, has emboldened me to make the following proposals:—

Government should manage to produce Ambar Charkhas in large numbers and supply them to the villages. Government can also arrange to work the Ambar Charkhas with electric power and thereby supply quality-yarn to the handloom.

It has been found that even those weavers who find it difficult to weave hand-spun yarn, have no difficulty in utilizing the Ambar Yarn.

The production of Ambar yarn is tantamount to decentralising the spinning mill industry with little capital, and the employment of more people than the mill industry can assure. I, therefore, recommend that next to the protection, given to Khadi, the State Government would do well to employ all handlooms for the production both of the utility cloth and artistic cloth, with the help of the Ambar yarn.